



Loss and creation

The total loss of one's data is among life's greatest frustrations. For Sang Jiajia, that profound loss became an inspiration.

His new work, *Layer Code*, recreates the emotion of destruction and creation in dance. It will be performed this weekend by BeijingDance / LDTX.

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Toxic smog shrouds the northeast

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Spain eager for investment

The crash of the Euro has done little to steer China's investors away from this country's potential.

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Records of a Xinjiang jade mine

Liu Xiaodong went to Hotan determined to preserve the memory of the conflicted jade mine in art.

Hazardous haze settles on Beijing

A heavy haze fell over Beijing last weekend, pushing the pollution index to a record high.

The density of PM 2.5 pollutants surpassed 900 micrograms per cubic meter in several districts, according to the Beijing Municipal Environmental Monitoring Center.

PM 2.5 are toxic particles smaller than 2.5 microns, which can enter the lungs and bloodstream.

The World Health Organization recommends that a density of 25 micrograms per cubic meter is a safe level of PM 2.5 pollution.

Pollution has become a national problem. Last weekend's hazardous haze covered most of the northeast and even spread to southeastern areas, including the provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan.

Among the 74 major cities capable of monitoring PM 2.5 levels, 33 reported levels exceeding 300 micrograms per cubic meter last Saturday.

Cause and impact

Meteorologists at the National Meteorological Station said relatively high humidity, weak winds and a lack of cold fronts contributed to the haze in many parts of the country.

A major contributor to PM 2.5 pollution has been a spike in coal consumption. Although Beijing has been trying to lead the nation in reducing its reliance on coal, polluted air from the surrounding areas regularly blows into the capital.

But last week's extreme pollution owed more to vehicle emissions.

Peng Yingdeng, an expert at the Ministry of Environmental Protection, said the leading cause of air pollution shifted from coal to vehicle emissions during the last decade.

Beijing Chaoyang Hospital and Beijing Children's Hospital received a flood of patients complaining of respiratory disease during the past few days.

Diseases caused by air pollution are not new to Beijing residents. Lung cancer has become the city's top killer of men, with an increased morbidity of 56 percent from 2001 to 2010, according to Beijing Institute for Cancer Research.



Beijingers don masks to keep out the smog.

CFP Photos

Pan Xiaochuan, deputy director at School of Public Health at Peking University, said increasing pollution is behind the higher morbidity of lung cancer.

Severe pollution is also a leading cause of chronic respiratory disease. A report on the State of the Environment in China said that if the concentration of suspended particulate matter doubles, the death rate of chronic respiratory disease would rise 38 percent.

A report carried out by School of Public Health at Peking University and Greenpeace three years ago predicted that the air could kill 8,572 people in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Xi'an if PM 2.5 levels remain elevated.

The cost of disease caused by air pollution per year is estimated to equal 1.2 percent of the GDP, which means China paid about 564 billion yuan for the effects of its air pollution in 2011 – much more than what the country earns selling masks.

Emergency measures

Doctors recommended N95 filter masks to citizens living in polluted areas. N95 is a type of mask that aims to filter 95 percent of PM 0.3 microns – much smaller than PM 2.5.

Sales of N95 respirators increased 110 percent between last Friday and last Sunday, according to Taobao's records. Sun Yuxing, a data analyst at Taobao, said 47 percent of the sales are in Beijing: more than 300,000 masks sold in Beijing alone.

In response to the pollution, 58 corporations in Beijing were ordered to halt emissions, 41 were told to cut emissions by 30 percent and 28 construction sites halted their foundation work.

Beijing Hyundai Motor temporarily suspended production on Sunday.

Cities such as Tianjin and Zhengzhou did not implement any emergency plans.

But regional pollution calls for long-term solutions, not emergency measures.

China is expected to carry out a national surveillance and risk-assessment network on the effects of PM 2.5 pollution, said Xu Dongqun, deputy director of the institute of environmental health and related product safety at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Xu said the network will study data from air-quality monitoring stations and records of hospital visits, plus medical and mortality records. It will help authorities to issue health warnings and advise the public. The network will start from Beijing.

Pan Xiaochuan, a professor at the School of Public Health of Peking University, also called for tougher restrictions on motor vehicles and the legal tools to punish offenders.

Pan said some European countries bar half of the motorists from taking to the streets on heavily polluted days.

Use of government-owned vehicles is also being reduced by 30 percent.

London may be an example from which Beijing can learn.

The Great Smog of London in 1952 caused the premature deaths of at least 4,000 people within four days. It urged the government to take efforts to reduce the air pollution.

Four years later, the British government enacted the first Air Pollution Control Law in the world, urging all electrical plants to close. During the following decades, the government continued to set specific punishments to regulate the city's number of private cars.

London has lost its reputation as the "city of fog" after decades of effort by both the government and the public.

Beijing still has a long way to go if it hopes to bring fresh air back to its people.

(By Bao Chengrong)



Embassy of Belgium raising money for sick child

By Liu Xiaochen

Gu Jing, wife of the Belgian Ambassador to China, held a charity bazaar at the Embassy of Belgium to raise money for the daughter of their sick electrician last Sunday.

Chen Luo, the electrician, has worked in the embassy district for more than seven years. During Gu's three years in Beijing, Chen has been a frequent aid on both weekdays and weekends.

Last October, Gu learned Chen had left Beijing to care for his daughter, Chen Yiqing, who was struggling with epilepsy at their hometown in Xinye, Henan Province.

Gu contacted him and asked him to bring his daughter's X-rays and medical test results to Beijing.

In November, a doctor at the Capital Institute of Pediatrics suggested bringing the child to Beijing for study after seeing the X-ray. They decided to wait for spring rather than move the girl in the cold.

On the evening of January 7, Chen's daughter developed a fever. Doctors at the local hospital said they suspected she was suffering from cerebral palsy and suggested sending her to a better hospital.

When she learned that the cost of treatment could be tens or hundreds of thousands yuan, Gu decided to reach out to the Beijing community.

She announced the charity bazaar on her microblog, and netizens helped her to find a host.

"Microblogs have a lot of power. If you want to help



Goods on sale at the embassy bazaar



Photos by Liu Xiaochen

others, they can help you to find a way," Gu said.

Among the many people who answered her call for help were the Irish ambassador's wife and many parents of children at the international school Gu's child attends.

After the Wenchuan earthquake of 2008, Gu held a charity bazaar in Belgium to sell handmade ornaments.

"I can't recall when I first got involved in charity. I remember that initially I wanted to help others, but I soon found charitable work also helped myself," she said. "It gives me the chance to

learn more and touch many lives, and that makes my own life more meaningful."

For this charity bazaar, Gu spent two days making chocolate. She spent more than 10 hours on the first batch. All together, she made 23 boxes of chocolate.

The bazaar included her own chocolates and jams, as well as other goods such as coffee, Scotch whiskey, organic vegetables and artistic works.

The bazaar raised a total 38,201 yuan, which will be disbursed by Price Waterhouse Coopers. Gu said she would use her microblog to provide

a detailed account of how the money is used.

Chen's daughter visited the hospital for a checkup on Monday. However, doctors recommended the girl not live at the hospital while the city faces its peak in seasonal illness.

"The Embassy of Belgium has done many similar activities. The embassy supports eight folk charity institutions in 14 provinces and cities for children with a variety of difficulties," Gu said.

"I've found that many embassies have similar charitable organizations. I hope to get more Chinese friends to join us



Gu Jing

Photo provided by Gu Jing

in using these charitable channels to help each other."

"When you treat charity as a heroic undertaking, it gives people a lot of pressure," she said. "It is just a grassroots way to help the community."

UNEP calls for better mercury treaty

By Liu Xiaochen

Rising mercury emissions in developing countries are putting communities and the environment at risk, according to new research by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

Titled "Mercury: Time to Act," the report says rapid industrialization has made Asia the largest emitter of mercury, accounting for half of the world's total emissions.

The demand for mercury is actually on the decline around the world. Emissions in parts of Africa, Asia and South America are due mainly to the use of the toxic element in small-scale gold mining and

coal burning.

Annual emissions of mercury from small-scale gold mining were estimated at 727 tons, or 35 percent of the world's total emissions.

The industry's 10 million to 15 million workers – 3 million of whom are women and children – face a direct threat to their health.

Mercury-free methods of gold extraction are low-cost, viable methods to reduce emissions. However, the socioeconomic conditions of developing countries and low awareness of the risks of mercury usually prevent these options from being explored.

The research also men-

tioned other sources of mercury, including metal and cement production, consumer products such as electronic devices, switches and batteries, cosmetics, dentistry, plastic production, the chlor-alkali industry and primary mining.

According to UNEP, a binding treaty would deliver major health and environmental benefits in developing countries.

The paper was submitted to the International Negotiating Committee on Mercury (INC5), held this week in Geneva.

Governments attending the conference came to discuss a global treaty to mini-

mize risks to people and the environment from exposure to mercury.

"At the UNEP Governing Council in 2009, nations agreed to launch negotiations for a legally binding treaty aimed at bringing down releases from sources such as industry and mining, address mercury-containing products, and tackle historical pollution sites-the final negotiations begin in just a few days' time," said United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

"Mercury has been known as a toxin and a hazard for centuries. Today, we have many

of the alternative technologies and processes needed to reduce the risks for tens of millions of people, including pregnant mothers and their babies," he said.

"While taking into account the impact on development, we must move to set national goals and reduction targets. Other efforts should work towards the formalization of the sector, which is largely unregulated," said Fernando Lugris (Uruguay), chairman of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

"As well as reducing health risks from mercury, this could give workers greater rights under labor laws," he said.

Spain woos Chinese investors



By Li Shangyan

In spite of the deep troubles brought on by the Euro Crisis and the country's own fiscal deficit, Spain is becoming an increasingly attractive destination for Chinese investors.

Growing popularity

Before the great crash of 2008, Chinese investment in Spain was negligible.

As of last year, Chinese investment topped €70 million (570 million yuan), up from €27 million in 2011, said Yan Banghua, consulate-general of China in Spain.

The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) and Huawei are among China's top investors in Spain.

ICBC opened its first office in Madrid in January 2011 to provide a channel for investment flow between the two countries. Its initial investment volume was €16.6 million.

Huawei came to Spain comparatively early, opening its first office in 2001. In 2011, it established a network operations center in Madrid.

Fosun International, the largest privately-owned holding company, has shown interest in investing in the Barcelona World tourism project to expand the growing Chinese tourism trade.

Barcelona World is a €4.5 billion mega complex of six theme parks, six hotels, casinos, restaurants and theaters being developed on the coast of Tarragona and funded by CaixaBank, Spain's largest savings bank.

Chinese investment is being sought on many fronts.

The most recent investment target has been the Spanish province of Catalonia, where the automotive and telecommunications sectors are the top two gateways. Last August, Huayi acquired the Catalan compressor manufacturer Cubigel.

To take advantage of Europe's push for renewable energy, Jiangsu Sunrain Solar



Spain is an old country with a rich history and dynamic potential.

CFP Photos

Energy began a joint venture with Spain's Niñerola Group.

Shenzhen Sunfor Light, the LED lighting producer that made the signs for the Beijing Olympic Games, also opened a distribution center for Europe and Latin America in Catalonia with a planned investment of €4 million over the next four years.

The China at Barcelona Summit, held for the second time in November, is organized by the Barcelona Chamber of Commerce, CaixaBank and the professional services firm Mazars to attract Chinese investment in southern Europe and the Mediterranean region.

Land of opportunity

Spain's infrastructure places

it among the world's Top 10 countries. It blows past other European countries with its 14,262 kilometers of motorways and highways, and has the fifth most extensive railway network and fourth largest maritime transportation network in the EU. It ranks third in Europe in terms of air passenger traffic.

The Spanish labor force ranks fourth in Europe in terms of the number of workers with post-secondary education in scientific and technical areas.

Since its peak in March 2009, Spanish manufacturing labor costs have decreased by more than 12 percent.

Arcano, an investment advisory firm, said the ratio of GDP per hour worked over is high

enough above the labor cost to put Spain ahead of much of the European labor market.

Spain ranks second after France in terms of tax subsidies for research and development. The Spanish government is so eager to attract foreign investment that it passed a law in November 2012 that grants residency permits to foreigners who buy homes worth more than €160,000 – a move aimed to draw in Chinese and Russian investors.

According to ICEX, a government investment agency, Spain offers investment opportunities in sectors and activities with significant added value, including information and communications technology, environment and water

treatment, biotechnology and health sciences, aeronautics and aerospace engineering and renewable energies.

Last year, China spent 52 billion on renewable energy – almost a fifth of the world's total investment.

Spain's leaders in renewable energy may meet China's development interests. In its 12th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development (2011-2015), China said it would spend \$473.1 billion on clean energy investments during the next five years.

Apart from a domestic market of 45 million consumers, Spain offers a strategic gateway for accessing the markets of the EU, North Africa and Latin America: a combined 1.3 billion consumers.

Recording Hotan



Liu Xiaodong

By Celine Lin

Last May, Liu Xiaodong, 50, embarked on a project that included oil paintings, documentaries, research and diaries to record his observations in Hotan, a town known for its jade production in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

The artist wanted to reveal the complexity of this place through paintings. Modernization and urbanization in Xinjiang has stimulated the local economy while also uprooting traditional ways of life. Art seemed to be an efficient method of reflecting upon the contradictions and conflicts.

All of his works were unveiled at a solo exhibition, *Liu Xiaodong's Project*, at Xinjiang International Exhibition Center in Urumqi last August. Now they have come to Beijing's Today Art Museum, where they will remain until February 23.

Curated by Hou Hanrou and Ou Ning, the exhibition showcases four new oil paintings – *East, South, West and North* – featuring geographical and cultural sceneries from Hotan, plus a documentary produced by A Cheng and directed by Yang Bo. Moreover, Liu's scripts, diaries and other materials are also on display.

Many scholars, writers, researchers, photographers and art critics were also involved in the project. A series of academic symposiums accompanied it, putting more focus on Hotan than its residents could have ever expected.

Humanitarian angle

Liu and his team went to Xinjiang last June and immediately commenced a two-month-long documentary called *Liu Xiaodong's Hotan Project*, recording local jade miners in a region made famous by the precious stone.

Liu chose Hotan because he was fascinated by the desert town's history. "About a thousand years ago, Hotan was the Mecca for Buddhists, and then it was ruled by Muslims," he said. "Religious conflicts often happened. The ethnic problem is a global issue nowadays. Hotan can be seen the forebear of a lot of today's problems."

Then there is jade. In Chinese tradition, it represents nobility, yet the excessive excavation of it has turned Hotan inside out.

He did not want to capture the city's "exoticness." Using methods learned from his previous series, *Three Gorges Series*, from 2004 to 2005, he simply paints what he sees on-site.

Liu had to set up a temporary studio. During his stay, he produced sketches, diaries, oil paintings and photos, all with cameramen tagging along. Liu considers the fundamental purpose of art to capture what is most exciting and authentic about a certain place, so as to diminish misunderstandings.

The process was achieved through entering the culture and life of the local residents. Hou said Liu's paintings are the expression of daily discoveries of beauty.

But Liu said he doesn't always search out what looks best.

"When we open our eyes, everything we see can be beautiful," he said. "What I see is also a reflection of my inner state."

He said he strives to paint in an unpretentious way, and to depict his subjects as naturally as possible.

Liu's approach is documented in his "autobiographical film" *Hometown Boy*, which won a Golden Horse Award in Taiwan for best documentary. Liu prefers becoming a part of the local community. "Keeping an open-mind is always crucial," he said.

After leaving Xinjiang, Liu said that what he misses most are the sandstorms. "The weather is unpleasant, yet it is the harshness that strengthens locals," he said.

Parallel projects

In order to complete the project, Hou initiated a complex series of projects there carried out at the same time.

Co-curator Ou led a group of researchers and journalists in their research of free expression. Local writers, historians, musicians and craftsmen were also involved. Many of the stories were published in Ou's bimonthly *Chutzpah* magazine.

The seminars include discussions of central Asia's history and reality, art and history in Xinjiang. Lecturers Uyghur writer Alat Asem, Chinese writer Liu Liangcheng, and photographer and Silk Road researcher Erh Deke. Transcripts of their talks will be published in an upcoming catalogue.

"To me, there are lots of possibilities when a person visits some place," Liu said. "Through this interdisciplinary project, not only can viewers appreciate the artwork, but gain a clearer understandings of the border area."

Seminars will also run during the course of the exhibition.

In May, the exhibition will travel to Israel.



Photos provided by Today Art Museum



The loss of emotional bonds

By Chen Nan

Few things are more frustrating in life than seeing a computer crash and destroy all your saved data. But an artist in Beijing has made an art out of this loss, reinterpreting the experience as a dance about seeking, deconstruction and creation.

Sang Jijia's work, *Layer Code*, will be performed this weekend by BeijingDance / LDTX.



Choreographer:
Sang Jijia

Decoding motion

Modern dance isn't just about leaping and swinging.

The most compelling images in *Layer Code* are the dancers' faces, projected onto 10 screens on stage. The pictures come alive in a fluid mix of motion and light.

Some frames constantly change, a reference to one's memory, which can sometimes be clear, and other times deceiving.

In a virtual space, one can easily override past records and start over by simply pushing a button. But it's not the case in real life.

Life experiences accumulate, but memory cannot be erased.

Sang manipulates time and space to allow dancers and audience members to experience movements in multiple layers.

With four cameras, close-up shots are taken of 11 dancers from different angles, using their facial variations to express their spirituality.

Focusing on the physical relationship between the body and space, the piece aims to explore the possibilities of human living.

"Each dancer moves in a way that suits him or her," said Li Dan, who saw a performance on January 16. "It



seems that every performer has his or her own story, and each does his or her own thing, untethered to stage directions."

This was part of the design. Sang learned about his dancers' personal lives and worked their stories into the piece.

"Modern dance is not just about the moves: it is an experience – human experience," he said.

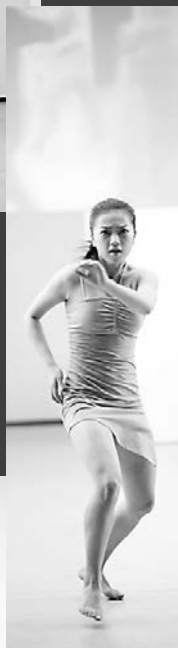
He gave young dancers unconventional assignments to shoot five pictures every day, add captions to each photo and turn them into short stories.

"Knowing their personality is helpful, because they are not my puppets. They boast their own insights and observations," Sang said. "My dancers are encouraged to display their own specialty on stage."

At first, young dancers just submitted fragmented ideas. Gradually, they learned to arrange them logically.

Accompanied by the electronic beats of Hong Kong's avant-garde musician Dickson Dee, every dancer did their own thing.

"I searched for young dancers



who wanted to express their inner world and personal interests," Sang said.

Inspired by experience

Sang's inspiration for his piece came from a computer crash in which he lost all his work.

The experience made him reflect on the relationship between people and their surrounding world, and how humans deal with material loss and spiritual nostalgia.

Born to a family of Tibetan shepherds in Gansu Province in the 1970s, Sang was first introduced to dance in 1986, when teachers from the Minzu University of China visited his hometown to recruit children to study ethnic and folk dance. Many of China's well-known minority dancers started their careers the same way.

Sang studied ethnic and folk dance at Minzu University. However, gradually he began to feel more constrained by his major, and faced criticism for violating the rules whenever he tried to instill a little personal expression in his dance.

A performance by the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, China's first modern dance group founded in the '90s, opened up another world to him.

"I hoped to dance like that," he says. "I felt that to continue my traditional study would be a waste of time."

Also during that period, with the help of Willy Tsao, a modern dance icon in China and artistic director of LDTX, Sang started to use free movements and widened his choice of music, subject matter and compositional methods.

After being recognized as "Star of the Century" in Guangzhou and achieving numerous accolades, including the top prize at the 7th International Dance Competition in Paris, he went to Germany to become the protégé of William Forsythe, one of the greatest living choreographers, for four years.

In 2007, he became the Resident Artist of BeijingDance / LDTX and Guangdong Modern Dance Company, which was established by Tsao and Li Hanzhong, and collaborated with them to create *Unspeakable* (2009) and *Standing Before Darkness* (2011).



Photos provided by BeijingDance / LDTX

Food brings comfort on murky days

By Annie Wei

You can be excused for wanting to leave Beijing last weekend, when the Beijing Municipal Environmental Monitoring Center said the density of PM 2.5 particles had exceed 700 micrograms per cubic meter, and people were warned to stop outdoor activities.

But leaving a place where you work and live isn't easy. The more practical solution is to live a low-carbon and healthy lifestyle.

Escape to Tianjin and enjoy its street snacks

If you work from home or freelance, it's easy to escape to nearby cities like Tianjin or Beidaihe for a few days.

Tianjin is a nice option for budget travelers, and easy to reach. Take Subway Line 4 to the Beijing Railway South Station, then hop on the 30-minute express train.

We recommend staying at Tianjin Yunwu Zhiwan, a new hostel (starting at 80 yuan for a bed per night) in the old commercial area of Binjiangdao. There's a network of narrow streets like Shanghai's Hengshan Lu, and European-style buildings, as well as tons of street food.

Here are five laozhihao – time-honored brand – eateries.

Laoyongsheng Baozipu

Its three-flavor baozi are good, with the pork filling ones recommended by local diners for its "authentic Tianjin flavor" and "juicy inside." The restaurant has retained its '80s decor, with an atmosphere not unlike a campus cafeteria.

Where: Ha'erbin Dao (near Xing'an Lu), Heping District

Cost: Average 14 yuan per person

Liuzhoulu Shaomaoguan

Shaomai are like dumplings but in a thin, pleated wrapper, and steamed instead of boiled. This eatery has many flavors of shaomai. Its cucumber lapi, a wider wheat or rice flour noodle, is the best. The trick is to add plenty of sliced cucumbers and mix with thick sesame sauce, topped with a bit of spice.

Where: 7 Liuzhou Lu, Heping District (opposite a primary school)

Cost: Average 28 yuan per person

Shaguoli

It's one of the most popular restaurants specializing in local homemade dishes. The most popular dishes include Lijia



The Tianjin paihuanggua, smashed cucumber, comes with sesame sauce.



Tianjin baodu, beef's stomach also mixes with sesame sauce.



Cujiao baicai shaguo, stewed cabbage, tofu with strong vinegar flavor and white pepper

Photos by Steven Chen

Dapai – house ribs – the meat is well stewed. Other dishes like baochao yaohua, fried pork kidneys and xiarong caogu baicai, fried cabbage with mushroom and shrimps.

Where: 46 Jiujiang Lu, Hexi District

Cost: Average 45 yuan per person

Tianjin Yunwu Zhiwan

Where: 120 Ha'erbin Dao, Heping District

Tel: 022-2723 0606



Strawberry and broccoli gelee

CFP Photo

Eat more vegetables

Health-conscious urban dwellers should eat more vegetables, which are easier to digest and healthier.

For delicious vegetarian meals, we recommend Samadhi, which earned its reputation with creative, delicately prepared and yummy dishes, such as the classic chrysanthemum tofu soup (28 yuan) with Japanese tofu cut into the shape of a chrysanthemum and served in a vegetable broth.

Its latest highlight is shuibaxian, eight-best water-grown vegeta-

bles (500 yuan per person), which are rare in north China. It includes water chestnut, arrowhead, red caltrop, zizania aquatic, water lily roots, water celery, gorgon fruit and water shield.

The restaurant offers quality tea, especially Tieguanyin from Anhui Province and organic oolong.

Samadhi Vegetarian and Teahouse

Where: 2/F, Shifang Haoting, 16 Xinyuan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 9 pm

Tel: 8453 1644



Green apple, celery and broccoli juice

Photo provided by Fruit Actually

Fresh juice from Fruit Actually

Three years ago, when Fruit Actually entered the Village North, its pomegranate and grape juice won it many loyal customers.

Unlike some small cafes that squeeze your apple or orange juice from rotting fruits, Fruit Actually guarantees freshness.

Its owner, Richard Qin, is often asked to create new concoctions that are good for the health, particularly in polluted environments.

One recommendation is the pear mixed with beetroots. The pears are good

for dry throats and dry weather, while beetroot is an anti-aging and detoxifying fruit. Their pectin can break down heavy metal and dust that people inhale – or at least make you feel better about it.

The store also offers delivery. Customers can call or order from its Taobao site: shop72627770.taobao.com.

Fruit Actually

Where: B1, Village North, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm

Tel: 6415 8385

Charm of vintage jewelry

By Annie Wei

Vintage is popular.

However, the vintage market boom has resulted in lots of poor items, so customers must be careful when buying.

This week, *Beijing Today* spoke with Liu Rui, 34, owner of Petit Wonder, a vintage boutique that opened last July and became a popular choice among the city's chic and selective shoppers.

Unlike most startup vintage businesses that acquire old pieces, Liu began collecting 10 years ago when she was studying in the UK. Antique stores and flea markets are her must-visit locations every time she travels abroad.

In every store, she'll ask a lot of questions about the pieces.

"Part of the charm [of vintage jewelries] is to know the story behind each piece and communicate with others," she said.

With years of experience and interest in vintage jewelry, Liu is able to glance at a piece and identify the brand and age.

Most items in her boutique are one-of-a-kind and each has a story. For example, the *My Fair Lady* collection from 1964 by BSK was inspired by the movie starring Audrey Hepburn.

Liu also works with indie designers. She was one of the first managers of Brand New China, the leading local designer consignment store at Sanlitun North, and communication director of xiu.com, an e-business company that aims to be the Chinese version of net-a-porter.com.

"I have been collecting for many years," she said. "After growing up and gaining more life experience, pieces I once loved and gave me so much happiness might not be the ones I want to keep for the next decade."

Opening a boutique gives her a chance to pass on her collection to others, who hopefully derive the same joy from the pieces.

Beautiful pieces range from a classic Chanel pearl necklace, which can cost up to 18,000 yuan, to cute small pearl earring that costs less than 100 yuan.

"I don't think vintage jewelry should be separated by 'affordable' and 'not affordable,'" she said. The value doesn't lie in the price.

Liu said she hopes her little boutique can bring together people who really like vintage jewelry and are interested in design and history.

And part of the fun of shopping is discovering pieces that might seem like bargains. Once, while visiting a store, Liu stumbled upon a piece that was so cheap, she asked the owner if the price tag was wrong. The owner said there was no mistake: it was, in fact, a hidden treasure.

"A customer might buy something they really like and realize someday it has great value," Liu said.

"I hide some bonus pieces in my boutique as well," she added.

The boutique house does not only sell vintage jewelries, Liu said. With passion for beautiful things with design sense, she plans to coverage indie designer's accessories and home items.

Petit Wonder

The boutique store is located at Sanlitun Lu.

Those interested should make an appointment with Liu Rui via her Sina-Weibo (weibo.com/u/2484959615).



From Stanley Hagler



My Fair Lady collection



Sterling chess brooches from UK, hand-carved cameo and Givenchy pendant



Statement jewelry from the 1980s, including from designers such as Karl Lagerfeld

Photos provided by Petit Wonder



Vintage costume jewelry from 1942 to 1995, including brands like Ciner, Chanel, Trifari and Coro